

continued from front

kingdom by allowing his kingdom to enter us (Luke 17:21). Our mortal bodies might be divinely exchanged at the end of days, but our heart will continue with our Savior for eternity. The heart is a treasure to be carefully guarded.

And it's Satan's perfect target for attack.

Peter says that the devil is our adversary, that he prowls around like a roaring lion looking for its prey (1 Peter 5:8). He may not be able to physically attack us, and there is good evidence to suggest that his power has been limited by God (Job 1; Revelation 20:2). So Satan uses the next most powerful tool in his tool belt: deception.

No knife, no gun, no bomb, no poison, no evil plan, no horde of barbarians, is as dangerous as a deceptive statement that slinks and winds its way through your brain, skewing your thoughts and causing you to throw yourself off the rescue ship of your own salvation. This is Satan's primary strategy. Like a siren singing her tempting song to lure you from safety and into the water, the devil tries to convince you to pull the trigger to your own spiritual demise. Consider John 8:44 BSB about Satan's deceiving ways.

We cannot overstate this. We cannot underestimate him. Satan is real, and he wants to murder us. Indeed, the very first sin and the fall itself are products of a dazzling deception. Each of us needs to reflect on and internalize the reality of how the serpent deceived Eve, because when all is said and done, we are all Eve. The Genesis story is meant to teach us something profound about the way all people are, so we have to listen

up. Satan's lie doesn't simply deceive Adam and Eve into breaking a command of God. It also wounds their hearts. Lies about God are dangerous because they harm our hearts.

But how were Adam's and Eve's hearts wounded? They were damaged because they became disillusioned about God. The devil badly wants to bring the Almighty down to our level and ruin his reputation. He wants us to believe that God is small and that he is petty like us. That he is selfish and even fearful of losing his power. If Satan can make God the monster or reveal him as merely the man behind the curtain, then God's name is discredited, and we are justified in behaving however we desire. Eve's sin was simply a response to this fractured view of her Father based on a lie.

The above was an excerpt from my newly released book, *Spiritual Trauma: A Guide for Healing Your Heart from Church Hurts*. In it, I discuss the ways that Satan works to bring about our destruction through the wounds we receive from other Christians at church. The good news is that the secret to healing these hurts is found in the pages of the Bible. This is the first of a series on Disciples Today that considers how we should think about spiritual or religious trauma, and what we can do to find recovery for our hearts.

**About the author:** Dr. Sean St. Jean is a therapist and professor of Social Work and Director of MSW Field Education at King University. He serves on the ICOC Minister's Health Committee and lives outside of Vancouver, Canada.

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# Guarding Our Hearts from Satan's Lies

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Healthy Spiritual Leadership Webinar**  
Online

February 8, 2024

**Teleios Society Conference**

San Antonio, TX, USA

February 22-24, 2024

**ICOC Leadership Meetings**

Los Angeles, CA, USA

March 17-24, 2024

**ICMC 2024**

Asheville, NC, USA

August 1-4, 2024

**North American Singles Conference**

Anaheim, CA, USA

August 29-September 1, 2024

**North American Church-Building**

**Teacher's Conference**

Lancaster, CA, USA

September 6-7, 2024

**DT Hawaii Cruise**

Hawaii

September 21-28, 2024

January 26, 2024 • Dr. Sean St. Jean – Vancouver, Canada

For disciples of Jesus, the church is supposed to be a great refuge; a body of Christ-followers living life together to the glory of God. Many of us have fond memories of being called out of the world years ago, following our Savior's call, and joining a tight-knit family of believers. This is a good thing.

Yet along the way, like in any relationship, most of us have felt the pain of disagreements, misunderstandings, quarrels, and hurts within the church. Some of us have even weathered mistreatment and harsh words from our fellow believers. As wonderful as our Christian life has been in many respects, we must acknowledge the not-awesome parts of belonging to a tight-knit and ambitious family of churches. The truth is that involvement in any tight-knit denomination comes with relational struggles and hurts. The church is a hospital for sinners, so we should not be shocked when people are wounded.

In my counseling practice, I have worked with many such wounded Christians who have had their hearts damaged by mistreatment in their churches. So I decided to write a book called *Spiritual Trauma: A Guide for Healing Your Heart from Church Hurts*. The following is a short excerpt from the book:

*Your heart is the most precious thing you will ever care for on this earth. The Scriptures reference it over a thousand times. The heart is your inner self; it is your mental, emotional, and moral core that drives everything you say and do (Luke 6:43-45).*

*The state of your heart matters more than anything else in life because it holds the power to embrace God or reject him. To see God's way or refuse to look. God Almighty stoops down to us by giving us the power to push him away or draw him close according to our will, and that will is determined by the state of our hearts.*

*Your heart is the realm that God desires to gently preside over. We enter his*



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